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In 1957 a number of Covina's downtown businesses were having a difficult time competing with the then newly opened Eastland Center in West Covina. Rather than attempting to adjust and be competitive the downtown merchants prevailed upon the City Council to rezone most of the city's older neighborhoods around the downtown from single-family residential housing to allow apartments.

The idea was that by having more people in the same area that business would increase. The concept failed. New residents also preferred to shop at Eastland, and the city lost the heritage neighborhoods that usually accompany older downtown areas.

The city's finance director and a financial consultant have both indicated that residential development does not generate enough revenue to cover the cost of services it needs, and the city manager pointed out in his budget submittal that the average expenditures in California cities exceed revenues by $218 per person. Despite that fact, the current City Council has approved a Town Center Specific Plan (TCSP) that includes jamming up to 800 more high-density housing units into the downtown.

As yet the city has not released the return-on-investment analysis or infrastructure costing it promised for this project even though it will cost millions of tax dollars.

The downtown needs a new business mix that is competitive and will attract people from outside the city. It does not need more subsidized housing or businesses.

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